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DR. FLEXNER'S CRITICS

(Concluded from pages 10, 18, 26)

On March 9 last, at a special meeting of The New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, held at Springfield, Mass., there was a discussion of The Modern School, in which, by previous arrangement, ex-President Eliot, Professor Shorey, Mr. Alfred E. Stearns, Principal of Phillips Academy, Andover, and Mr. Otis W. Caldwell, Director of the Lincoln School, took part. These papers were published in the journal called *Education*, for May, 1918, as follows: The Modern School, Charles W. Eliot, 38:659-667; "The Modern School", Paul Shorey, 668-684; Education and the New Order, Alfred E. Stearns, 685-693; An Experimental School, Otis W. Caldwell, 694-705. Following these set papers came others, more or less extemporaneous, which are also published in the number of *Education* named above, by Mr. Payson Smith, Commissioner of Education, Mass., Professor Clifford H. Moore, of Harvard University, Mr. George H. Browne, of The Browne and Nichols School, Cambridge, Mass. (The Modern School and Present Day Distractions, pp. 710-721, friendly to the Classics), Professor Paul H. Hanus, of Harvard University (hostile to Latin), and Mr. Charles H. Forbes. It is in no spirit of unfairness, at least in no spirit of conscious and intentional unfairness, that I confine comments to Professor Shorey's paper. Dr. Eliot said nothing he had not said before. He still thinks of education only in terms of himself and his own children and children's children; training in science made him the great man he feels himself to be, and so training in science every body must have. Would Dr. Eliot accept the argument sometimes put forth for the Classics that training in the Classics has helped to make men—e.g. England's statesmen, or rather England's scholar-statesmen—effective and great? But why should one expect new ideas, or evidences of intellectual flexibility in the man who, after he had laid down his office as President of a great University, quoted his inaugural address of thirty-nine years before, and then told the world that "After thirty-nine years of experience in the same office he finds the above description correct"? (University Administration, 239-241. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908). Few men are willing to admit that they knew as much, on any subject, thirty-nine years ago as they know now.

But let us turn to Professor Shorey's paper. He

began by pointing out, in effect, that the proponents of the Modern School cannot, or at least, do not, reason. He commends the ardor of Dr. Eliot, but says (669-670):

But outside of the practical problems of collegiate administration it is difficult to put one's finger upon President Eliot's specific contribution to the theory of education, and still more difficult to discover what are his specific and pertinent arguments about the place of Latin in secondary and collegiate education in the America of today.

He remarks (670) that

Professor Nutting of California has shown in *School and Society* that President Eliot's use of statistics is hardly more critical than Mr. Flexner's. But President Eliot rarely finds time to notice such minute cavils. My own objection is broader. A partisan politician intent only on victory may use statistics effectively to argue that his measure is "sure to pass" and that the prudent will make haste to climb into the band-wagon. But from our more disinterested point of view, even if the statistics of a decade or two did happen to show a diminution of interest in Latin, they would leave intact the question whether a judicious counsellor would seek to accelerate or to retard the tendency. The decline of any great human interest in our schools and colleges to a place below its real significance for our total culture and civilization might indeed be the very reason of endeavors to revive its study. It is pleasant to swim with the stream, but it is not the sole function of a leader of opinion. President Eliot did not select his five foot shelf from the statistics of the best sellers of the past twenty years. And he would probably deplore as much as I do Mr. John Powys' list of the hundred best books that includes the unspeakable *Sanine*, and, I believe, omits *Homer* and *Vergil*. And yet the practical effect of President Eliot's utterances is to range him in the popular judgment with the educators who would feed the souls of the coming generation on Shaw, Wells, Dostoevsky, Gorky, Strindberg, Nietzsche, Freud rather than on obsolete classics and stodgy Victorians.

Next he criticizes Dr. Eliot's lack of logic (672):

The credulity of the American people, for example, momentarily absorbs his attention as a chief symptom and proof of the mistaken education which a conventional curriculum forced upon them. I understood him to imply that the discipline of the chemical laboratory had been his own sole defense against that credulous temper, and that he had now fortified himself further by the resolution to believe nothing on second hand evidence. But he surely cannot expect any considerable proportion of American youth to enjoy more of the discipline of the physical and chemical laboratory than has fallen to the lot of Sir Oliver Lodge who is probably the most credulous gentleman now in the public eye on either shore of the Atlantic. And President Eliot himself, distrustful as he may be of

secondary evidence in matters of moment, would still have profited by any discipline that would have made it impossible for him to print as an argument against classical studies a second or third hand statement of Franklin about the size of Renaissance editions of the classics, when ten minutes critical inquiry would have conducted him to the truth in the preface of Aldus. But I perhaps naively mistake for a flaw of logic what is only lack of interest in the subject.

Professor Shorey then points out (673) that the argument for the Modern School "could be repeated almost verbatim with the substitution of English or Chemistry as the suppressed subject".

The argument drawn from the Lincoln school belongs in short to a type which I have been in the habit of designating to myself as the "fallacy of idealizing description". The most elementary example of this is the pictures of pretty children in interesting attitudes that accompany popular expositions of the Gary or Montessori system or illustrate Dewey's "Schools of the Future". What mother can resist the emotion of conviction that the contemplation of such carefree happy infancy inspires? It is precisely the psychology of the gigantic bill-board advertisements of "milk from contented cows". How can you distrust the contents of the can when you have seen the purple cows grazing? And indeed the connection is very close between the psychology of the new education and the psychology of advertising.

A most interesting and valuable paragraph is that in which Professor Shorey argues (674) that, in proportion as the enthusiasm or personal ambition or exceptional resources at the command of some individual, especially if that individual happens also to be particularly gifted, lead to a special success with a method or a School, that very success reduces the value of the 'experiment' for education in general, since (674)

The teaching of the world is and must remain largely wholesale task work, a gigantic chore. The defects are mostly the limitations of the average man in power of sustained enthusiasm, self-sacrificing devotion and intelligence. As Chamfort said one hundred and fifty years ago, in order to reform education you must reform everything else. Impatient idealists from Plato down have expected to reform everything else by reforming education out of hand. The exceptional school that in the first flush of enthusiasm or ambition overcomes these obstacles may afford helpful hints for combating them elsewhere, but its very success in this respect invalidates its testimony to the superiority of the particular curriculum that its founders favor.

Professor Shorey then insists (675) that the Modern School is not an experiment, in any proper or scientific sense of the word, and very politely, but all the more effectively, points out that the supporters of the Modern School, though their attention has repeatedly been called to this fact, "continue to employ the word 'experiment' as they do the name Lincoln, for its advertising value".

Professor Shorey then turns to consider the positive arguments for Latin (676):

The positive arguments for Latin can be stated as well in five minutes as in half an hour. There are four or five chief considerations; but for argumentative purposes it is largely a question of the burden of proof.

For nearly two thousand years some acquaintance with the Latin language and Latin civilization has been a prominent part of all liberal education above the elementary schools. From time to time since the Renaissance, protestants have arisen—some of them obscurantist opponents of all study of the past, others merely protesting against the excessive and exclusive study of Latin and Greek. The *relative* significance of Latin has of course diminished with the development of modern languages and modern sciences. But the majority of thoughtful and cultured men in England and America have continued to believe that some acquaintance with Latin is still a desirable and in many cases a necessary constituent in the secondary and higher education of English speaking people. Their reasons broadly are: its presumptive and proved superiority as an instrument of general linguistic training; its relations to the English language; the intrinsic value of Latin literature and the impossibility of understanding European and especially English literature without it. Each of these topics would demand at least an hour for an exposition and illustration which after all would be superfluous because the work has been repeatedly done, sometimes better, sometimes worse, but adequately enough, in the aggregate. No speaker in half an hour could resume for you the contents of the Princeton volume on "The Value of the Classics", of Livingstone's recent book, of Lord Bryce's recent article, or of my own "Case for the Classics", to say nothing of the enormous literature cited in its footnotes.

He maintains as a "somewhat fresher topic" that the study of Latin has peculiar value for American education in the present world crisis (677):

There is a dangerous and treacherous conspiracy to make this nation bi-lingual. . . . Under American conditions the teaching of any foreign language in elementary grades will be a tool of propaganda. One of the wisest of critics has said, "No one can learn fanaticism from Cicero and Horace". Or as Ferdinand Brunetiere once put it, "The study of the classics is neither professional, confessional, nor *passional*". The substitution for modern languages in the last years of the grades and the earlier years of the high school of even a slight study of Latin will avoid these dangers, will give in a better form the indispensable general discipline in the logic of language, will confirm the predominance and improve the quality of English in this country, will prepare the student for the reader mastery of French, Spanish, and Italian when he needs them.

The concluding pages, in which Professor Shorey makes the point that the utterances of Dr. Eliot, and others like him prove them to be in reality "without genuine feeling for any of the world's supreme classics" should be read in full.

I have put together, in this editorial, some hints of the reactions to Dr. Flexner's proposals in particular, and to the general movement of which they are a part. It is plain that the friends of the Classics, the country over, were not voiceless; they expressed themselves freely in opposition to Dr. Flexner. In all this there should be comfort and strength for the lovers of the Classics.

Another source of comfort may well be mentioned as a fitting close to this discussion. Dr. Albert Shaw, in his paper on Classic Ideals and American Life, in

THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 10.217-220, concluded by pointing out how much of the Classics he found in a single copy of a newspaper, published in the midst of our last Presidential campaign. This reminds me of a fine paper by Professor Kent, of which mention should have been made long ago. It is entitled Latin and Greek in the Newspapers, and appeared in the Alumni magazine published at the University of Pennsylvania, formerly known as Old Penn, but now called The Pennsylvania Gazette. See volume 15.386-390 (March 30, 1917). This paper, read at the Fourth Annual Meeting of The Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of Liberal Studies, presents an astonishing array of evidence that to the writers in the Philadelphia newspapers, at least, the Classics are not dead, and that these writers have no fear that the Classics are dead to their readers.

C. K.

SOME FOLK-LORE OF ANCIENT PHYSIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

(Concluded from pages 21, 29)

We have now noted the beliefs connected with the organs of the lower and the upper trunk cavity and with the head. There remain to be discussed certain elements of our physical constitution which are common to the whole body, namely, the humors, bones, nerves, flesh, and skin.

From the time of Hippocrates the ancients believed that there were four cardinal fluids of the body—*sanguis*, *cholera* or yellow bile, *melancholia* or black bile, *phlegma* (Isidorus, Origines 4.5).

These four liquids were known as *humors* (*humor* being the Latin word for 'liquid'), and good health was thought to depend on the maintenance of a just proportion among them. The balance or commixture of the humors was known as a man's *temperament*, that is, his 'mixture' (L. *tempero*, 'to mix')⁵², or as his *complexion* (from a Latin word meaning 'combination', derived from *com-*, 'together', and *plecto*, 'to weave'). Thus if a man had more blood than any other humor in his system, he was said to be of a *sanguine* temperament or complexion (L. *sanguis*, 'blood'); if more bile, of a *bilious* temperament or complexion; if more phlegm, of a *phlegmatic* temperament; if more melancholy (or black bile), of a *melancholy* temperament. If the temperament, or balance of the humors, was greatly disturbed, the result was *distemper*⁵³, that is, a 'variance from the proper mixture'⁵⁴

Temper, however, which was a synonym of *temperament*, has taken a different course. We use it vaguely for 'disposition', but commonly associate it in some way with 'irascibility'. 'Keep your *temper*', 'he lost

⁵²Compare Ben Jonson, Cynthia's Revels, 2.3 A creature of a most perfect and divine temper, one in whom the humors and elements are peaceably met, without emulation of precedence.

⁵³This word may be used of either physical or mental condition. Thus Shakespeare writes, II King Henry IV 3.1. 41-43:

It is but as a body yet distemper'd;
Which to his former strength may be restored
With good advice and little medicine.

Hamlet's madness is called a distemper. Compare also Tempest 4.1.145 touch'd with anger so distemper'd. So Franklin says in his Autobiography, My distemper was a pleurisy which very nearly carried me off.

⁵⁴The quotations are from Greenough and Kittredge, Words and their Ways in English Speech, 30-31, 32.

his *temper*', 'ill-tempered'⁵⁵, show a trace of the old meaning; but the colloquial 'What a *temper* he has!', 'He is in such a *temper*!' would never be referred to physiological science by one who did not know the history of the word.

Upon the blood depended sweetness of disposition and geniality: *Sanguis Latine vocatus quod suavis est, unde et homines, quibus dominatur sanguis, dulces et blandi sunt* (Isidorus, Origines 4.5.6). The blood was aided and abetted by the bile in producing ill humor: *Ex sanguine et felle acutae passionis nascuntur, quas Graeci δξεία vocant* (Isidorus, 4.5.7)⁵⁶.

These beliefs are reflected indirectly in English by such expressions as good humor, ill humor, in humor (obsolete), out of humor, vein of humor⁵⁷.

As might be expected, passionate love is occasionally represented as having its abode in the blood; compare Aen. 4.1-2. One can compare with this Bassanio's words addressed to Portia, M. V. 3.2.178: Only my blood speaks to you in my veins.

There are still other popular notions connected with the blood. According to Pliny, N. H. 11.221, animals with abundant rich blood are irascible; those with thick blood courageous; those with thin blood intelligent; those with little or no blood timid⁵⁸. Pliny adds, 11.226, that there are persons who believe that the keenness of the mind does not depend upon the thinness of the blood⁵⁹. Empedocles was numbered among those who attributed acuteness or bluntness of intellect to the quality of the blood⁶⁰.

Pliny further informs us, N. H. 11.224, that the blood spreading over the face indicates changing mental attitudes, by depicting shame, anger, and fear through the varying degrees of pallor and redness. So much is true, but our author adds that the redness

⁵⁵Compare Julius Caesar 4.3.113-115 Hath Cassius lived To be but mirth and laughter to his Brutus, When grief and blood ill-temper'd vexeth him?

⁵⁶Such notions about the blood are frequently found in Shakespeare. The following quotations from II King Henry IV are worth citing: 2.3.30 humours of the blood; 4.3.34 as humor as winter. There is a close connection between one's disposition and the blood. Compare 4.4.38 When you perceive his blood inclined to mirth. The opposite side of one's nature is likewise affected. Compare 4.4.63 When rage and hot blood are his counsellors; 4.5.38 Thy due from me is tears and heavy sorrows of the blood.

Another illuminating instance is to be found in Julius Caesar 4.3.119-121:

Have not you love enough to bear with me
When that rash humour which my mother gave me
Makes me forgetful?

⁵⁷'A diseased condition of any one of the four humors might manifest itself as an eruption on the skin; hence such an eruption is still called a *humor* in common language. Again, an excess of one of the humors might make a man odd or fantastic in his speech and actions. Thus *humorous* took the meaning 'eccentric', and a '*humorous* man' was what we call, in modern slang, 'a crank'. The 'comedy of humors', of which Ben Jonson is the best exponent, found material in caricaturing such eccentric persons. From this sense, *humor* had an easy development to that of 'a keen perception of the odd or incongruous', and we thus arrive at the regular modern meaning of the word. It is certainly a long way from *humor* in the literal sense of 'liquid' or 'moisture' to *humor* in the sense in which that quality is so often associated with wit' (Greenough and Kittredge, Words and their Ways in English Speech, 32-33).

⁵⁸Compare figurative uses of 'warm-blooded', 'cold-blooded', 'sanguine'.

⁵⁹Compare 'Blood will tell'.

⁶⁰Sed Empedocles causam argutae indolis et obtusae in sanguinis qualitate constituit (Tertullian, De Anima 20).

Compare King Lear 3.1.40 I am a gentleman of blood and breeding.